

**Crypto Cover-Ups: The Real History of U.S. ties to Central American  
Military Dictators Has Yet to be Written**

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“For too many years, we've been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs.”  
—President Jimmy Carter (May 22, 1977)

As Bob Woodward and the *Washington Post* show again how journalism is indeed the first draft of history, unmasking the real Donald Trump's role in fighting the deadly coronavirus, another of the newspaper's exposés earlier in 2020 may well finally entomb attempted revisionist histories about a recent generation of South American dictators and their so-called “dirty wars.” The *Post* story focused on Crypto, the previously unknown worldwide technological penetration by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the inner workings of other countries' national and internal security agencies.<sup>1</sup> Coming to power in coups, a generation of bloody strongmen used purposefully overblown leftist threats as they secretly abducted, tortured and murdered tens of thousands of people. Often their actions were

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<sup>1</sup> The Agency's own official history of Crypto called its penetration into the clandestine world of Latin American despots the “intelligence coup of the century.”

accompanied by pseudo-medical metaphors meant to instill terror and complicity in the general populace, suggesting that mortal political “viruses” infected their countries’ national organisms and needed to be lanced no matter the human cost.

The *Post* ran another article just a month after the February publication of the Crypto exposé—this one about a Salvadoran prosecutor’s exemplary request for U.S. documentary evidence needed for the prosecution of those responsible for the military slaughter of nearly a thousand men, women and children by U.S. trained troops in El Mozote, El Salvador. It contained no mention of Crypto, and what was known then and later, inside the U.S. intelligence community.

Should former Vice President Joe Biden win in November, a 180-degree reset to U.S. policy in Latin America needs to go beyond merely calling into account Trump’s current choices as regional allies—such as far-right former military officer Jair Bolsonaro—and a vigorous revindication of the human rights revolution started by President Jimmy Carter. If the kind of peaceful revolution Biden-Harris say they offer American voters is to accompany real change in U.S. foreign policy, a forward-looking cleansing that can only come from the full public disclosure of the U.S. role in similar Cold War far-right alliances and its lasting impact around the Americas until today is needed. There is no statute of limitation on crimes against humanity, and no better way for Washington to signal an end to the impunity of the regional militaries the Pentagon has long supported.<sup>2</sup>

In early September, Department of Homeland Security draft documents leaked to the media predicted an “elevated (national) threat environment at least through next year,” during which the most “persistent and lethal threats” are internationally-networked U.S. white supremacists. Understanding what the Intelligence Community knew about the worst modern terrorist outrage, of neo-Nazi vintage, in the United States occurring before 9/11 less than a mile from the White House, and how it came to use those who inherited that evolving network as preferred (if clandestine) allies, is key to understanding some of the thorniest domestic and international challenges we face today.

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<sup>2</sup> At the end of the Cold War, the reformist former head of the CIA, William Colby, told me that, in his opinion, no country in the region “with the exception of Colombia and, perhaps, Peru,” needed a military. In a June 1975 telephone conversation Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, worried about the then CIA director’s willingness to cooperate with Congressional investigations of past Agency malpractice and misdeeds, used his own pseudo-medical diagnosis when he referred to Colby as a “psychopath.” According to the telephone transcript Kissinger complained, “On top of it you have the pysopath (*sic*) / running the CIA. You accuse him of a traffic violation and he confesses murder.”

*Crypto Loyalties*

Last February, what at first seemed to be a blockbuster investigation by the *Post* showed how the CIA for more than half a century owned and directed a Swiss company that supplied cryptography machines worldwide to foreign military, police and spy agencies. The gambit allowed Langley unique access to the innermost workings of some 120 nations that purchased Crypto products. The CIA, the *Post* noted, “was, in effect, supplying rigged communications gear to some of South America’s most brutal regimes and, as a result, in [a] unique position to know the extent of their atrocities.” The *Post* series’ damning, yet incomplete, look could have gone on to investigate just how much the Agency knew about bloody far-right military regimes and real and would-be dictators it chose to work with throughout Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s.

What the *Post* exposé did not address, and the information gap that needs to be filled, is how—fully informed about campaigns of state terror from Buenos Aires and Santiago to Tegucigalpa, San Salvador, and beyond—not only did the CIA dodge the legal obligations inherent in knowing about the atrocities, but instead “opt(ed) against doing so at times to preserve its access to valuable streams of intelligence.”

Left undone is a far more detailed examination, using Crypto files, of the role played by the notorious Argentine “dirty warriors” that the Agency made full, if clandestine, partners in its own operations in Central America. Cryptogate shows how at that time the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies sat atop of a trove of information that enabled it to conduct the most extensive, relevant and complete “background checks” possible of those with whom it chose to work. Still outside public knowledge, and thus authentic civilian oversight, is the real reach and continuing impact of what was seen then in the intelligence community as “plausibly deniable” operations.

For example, the Atlacatl Battalion, an elite counterinsurgency force created at the School of the Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, GA, and whose senior officers were trained there, directed the murder at El Mozote (the SOA was shut down by an act of the U.S. Congress only in 2000). “The extreme rightists...supported by most wealthy Salvadorans...bear an enmity toward the political center almost as great as their hatred of the left,” a secret CIA Directorate of Intelligence “Reference Aid,” written in 1984, reported. “They consider the centrists to be virtual collaborators with Marxist groups.” Argentina’s juntas were the other leg of the Salvadoran state terrorist trifecta.

*History Matters*

In their carrying out illegal and bloody tasks throughout Central America, the Agency did an end run around Congressional prohibitions and, most certainly, the most important and lasting international vision of Commander-in-Chief and U.S. Naval Academy graduate Jimmy Carter. News of the CIA Crypto penetration left wide open for further investigation how much the Agency knew and when they knew it, on how in the last year of the Carter presidency—a period dirty warriors hoped would be merely a four-year parenthesis in official U.S. policy—its covert Argentine paramilitary partners in Central America helped neo-Nazi generals in league with drug cartels and Italian terrorists overthrow a democratically-elected government in Bolivia. The issue was only cryptically referenced by *Post* national security correspondent Greg Miller, who noted in a February 17<sup>th</sup> tweet on the story he co-authored: “The CIA-Crypto operation gave U.S. spies window into mass killings in Latin America and other human rights crises for decades. Did US fail to intervene or expose these events to protect the Crypto operation and intel sources?”

The fault line only partly exposed by Miller’s question goes from the notorious neo-Nazi Operation Condor operating out of Santiago and Buenos Aires, to the massacre at El Mozote and the killing of five Jesuit priests dragged from their beds in the Salvadoran capital by senior army officers also trained by American advisers, and much more of crucial relevance today. A former CIA officer who trained Guatemalan guerillas in the 1954 coup against the democratic government of Jacobo Arbenz, in 1986 wrote in the *Los Angeles Times* about the parallels between regime change efforts then and in Nicaragua (Figure 1). He took pains to point out that the Agency’s liaison officer with its military co-conspirators in Honduras would 32 years later be Ronald Reagan’s assistant secretary of defense, helping to coordinate the armed rightwing anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionary movement, popularly known as the Contra.

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S (Park V.)

LOS ANGELES TIMES  
16 March 1986

## For a CIA Man, It's 1954 Again

By PHILIP C. ROETTINGER

It is nighttime and we are encamped in a remote area along the Honduran border. A ragtag group of rebels is resting in anticipation of the fighting. They laugh at what they plan to do to the sons-of-bitches after they take over. They are driven by the prospect of power and wealth, not ideology. They are unaware that the President of the United States has described their mission as "preventing the establishment of a communist beachhead in the Western Hemisphere." They intend to overthrow the government, period.

The scene is Honduras all right. But the year is 1954 and the President is Dwight D. Eisenhower. The rebels are Guatemalan, not Nicaraguan. Still, President Reagan, who will address the nation tonight to rally support for his proposal to provide \$100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*, is repeating Eisenhower's tragic error.

As a CIA case officer, I trained Guatemalan exiles in Honduras to invade their own country and unseat the elected president, Jacobo Arbenz. Our liaison officer with the Honduran military was Nestor Sanchez, now an assistant secretary of defense and a key policy maker in the current war against Nicaragua. We enjoyed great secrecy, but in the final stages of our project, rumors prompted the Organization of American States to dispatch a delegation to Honduras to investigate. Warned by a cable from our Miami headquarters, we quickly dismantled our base and fled to Nicaragua to avoid exposure. It was there, in a Managua hotel, that I received the news: Arbenz was out.

I now consider my involvement in the overthrow of Arbenz a terrible mistake, one that this Administration seems bent on reenacting in Nicaragua.

In March, 1954, three months before we toppled Arbenz and installed our handpicked "liberator," Col. Carlos Castillo Armas, CIA Director Allan Dulles convened his Guatemalan operatives at Opa-Locka Marine Air Base in Miami for a pep talk. Seated in front of us and puffing on his pipe, Dulles told us exactly the same thing that Reagan tells the American people now: that U.S. support for the rebels will foil the spread of communism.

Later, I learned that Dulles had lied to us. Communism was not the threat we were fighting at all; land reform was. Fulfilling his campaign pledge to transform Guatemala into a "modern capitalist state," Arbenz took over some unused land belonging to United Fruit. This angered the Boston-based company, which considered its rights in Guatemala superior to those of Guatemalans. So it asked the CIA to overthrow Arbenz and we complied, trumping up the same charge of "spreading subversion" that the President now levels at Nicaragua.

to 31 years of repressive military rule and the deaths of more than 100,000 Guatemalans. Furthermore, the overthrow of the Arbenz government destroyed vital social and economic reforms, including land distribution, social security and trade-union rights. Thirty years later, Nicaraguans finally have such benefits; Guatemalans and Hondurans are still waiting.

Support for the Nicaraguan *contras* portends the same bloodshed. Even if they are able to unseat the Sandinista government—with or without the help of U.S. troops—can anyone sincerely believe that they will be able to govern? Hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans have been beneficiaries of land, health care and education under the current government; they are hardly likely to acquiesce to rule imposed by the United States.

The fruitlessness of our current course struck home for me during a recent trip to northern Nicaragua. Accompanied by only a driver, I toured the countryside, talking with Nicaraguans from all walks of life. *Contra* attacks and atrocities have only stiffened their resolve to prevail over what they regard as foreign intervention. Surprisingly, Nicaraguans to a person also said they liked Americans but not our government. We shouldn't ignore this residue of good will, which will surely not remain if we continue on our present course.

The coup that I helped engineer in 1954 inaugurated an unprecedented era of intransigent military rule in Central America. Generals and colonels acted with impunity to wipe out dissent and garner wealth for themselves and their cronies. Their days became numbered in 1979 with the overthrow of Nicaraguan dictator and U.S. ally Anastasio Somoza. Today, there are elected civilian governments in every Central American capital.

Congress and the American people must decide whether this country embarks on a new era of conciliation with its southern neighbors or reverts to an earlier era of underhanded coercion. Eisenhower's Arbenz must not become Reagan's Ortega.

I am 70 years old now. I have lived and worked in Latin America for more than 30 years. Done with skulduggery, I devote my time to painting some of the region's beautiful scenery. It's painful to see my government repeat the mistake in which it engaged me 32 years ago. I've grown up. I only wish my government would as well.

*Philip C. Roettinger is a retired Marine Corps colonel living in Mexico.*

Figure 1. Article by Philip Roettinger.

Ironically, coming early this year, as presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders and his White House rivals re-litigated U.S. policy on Cuba and Central America, the *Post* "scoop" fell quickly, though not entirely, to the wayside in a domestic political environment where recent history, particularly that outside the United States, is too often relegated to the anecdotal and the nostalgic, when not politically rhetorical or purposefully ideological. Yet fundamental questions still unaddressed paint an even darker view of the CIA role in the run up to and during

the presidency of a Reagan still largely beloved in today's establishment media (this even as Reagan's place in history is stained following documentary disclosure of his previously only-suspected, personal racist mean streak.)

Beginning in the mid-1970s, South America's military dictatorships engaged in a hemisphere-wide state terrorist crackdown on dissidents. On September 21, 1976 Operation Condor went so far as to murder the exiled Chilean foreign minister Orlando Letelier and his American assistant, Ronni Karpen Moffitt by way of a car bombing in Washington, D.C. (A response by Justice Department prosecutor Eugene Proper a year after the outrage in a now-declassified memo is particularly relevant in discussions about Crypto: "It would be very unfortunate," he said, "if one agency of our Government possessed information which may be relevant to this murder and would not disclose it to us.")

Knowing all that the Argentine generals had already done, and what they both publicly and privately claimed they wanted to do, Langley nonetheless made those who, as modern historian John Dinges has noted, ran "torture camps, body dumps, and crematoriums" its privileged proxies in its clandestine Central American operations.

The revelations about Crypto also underscore the dangers of Trump Administration policy in the region, the palpable abandonment of values and freedoms Americans hold dear while at the same time adopting what human rights champion Jimmy Carter once said, in an earlier context, were "flawed and erroneous principles and tactics" characteristic in thought and deed of the Vladimir Putins of the time. Emerging horror stories today from La Paz, Bolivia, to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and ranging from the treatment of emigrants fleeing into the United States and the beckoning of the regional militaries back into power, have a concrete and worrisome precedent of historic proportions.

#### *Intelligence for What Purpose?*

The regional anti-communist "crusade" led by the Argentine military regime shielded a vast range of illicit activities, including working hand in glove with drug cartels and arms trafficking. Yet, having penetrated the innermost workings of the vicious junta in Buenos Aires, when it came to basic issues of human dignity and the rule of law the CIA sat on its hands during the Carter Administration's human rights revolution. The late F. Allen "Tex" Harris, a young American diplomat stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, bravely sought to find answers for family

members about many of the thousands of those “disappeared” into an Argentine network of more than 340 concentration camps, then tortured—often as recordings of Adolf Hitler’s speeches were played in the background—and buried in either mass graves or pushed out, alive, from military aircraft into the South Atlantic.

Although the FBI did assist him in his work, Harris later told me, the U.S. intelligence community did virtually nothing to help. In late 1978, Harris wrote a letter to an editor of the *CIA Latin America Brief* in which the relatively junior diplomat challenged the agency's view that head of the junta, General Rafael Videla (later convicted of crimes against humanity), was a “good guy.” Harris presciently argued, “What concerns me is that the article is reflective of the intelligence community's current assessment of Argentina.” Given the Agency role with Crypto, it is impossible that the CIA did not then have a ground-floor view about the nature, purposes and inspiration of the clandestine repression.

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
JULY 1973 EDITION  
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

8/18/80

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

**Memorandum** UNCLASSIFIED **BO 009**

TO : Political Files DATE: 8/18/80

THRU : POL - Mr. King

FROM : POL - Townsend B. Friedman

SUBJECT: Hypothesis -- The GOA As Prisoner of Army Intelligence

It is possible to conclude that the policy-making levels of the GOA are prisoners and victims of intelligence services here, particularly the Army's 601 Battalion. Over the last several months the GOA has been embarrassed or troubled by a series of events in which it is reasonable to suppose that the 601 played a decisive role:

- The kidnappings in Peru which almost certainly were the work of the 601.
- The suspicious discovery of one of the kidnapping victims dead in Madrid.
- Politically acute members of Videla's staff must realize that the continued tactic of murdering Montoneros without due process is no longer necessary from a security point of view and extremely costly in terms of Argentina's international relations. (There is a countervailing theory that these tactics were the product of a Page 1 of 2

Page 1 of 2

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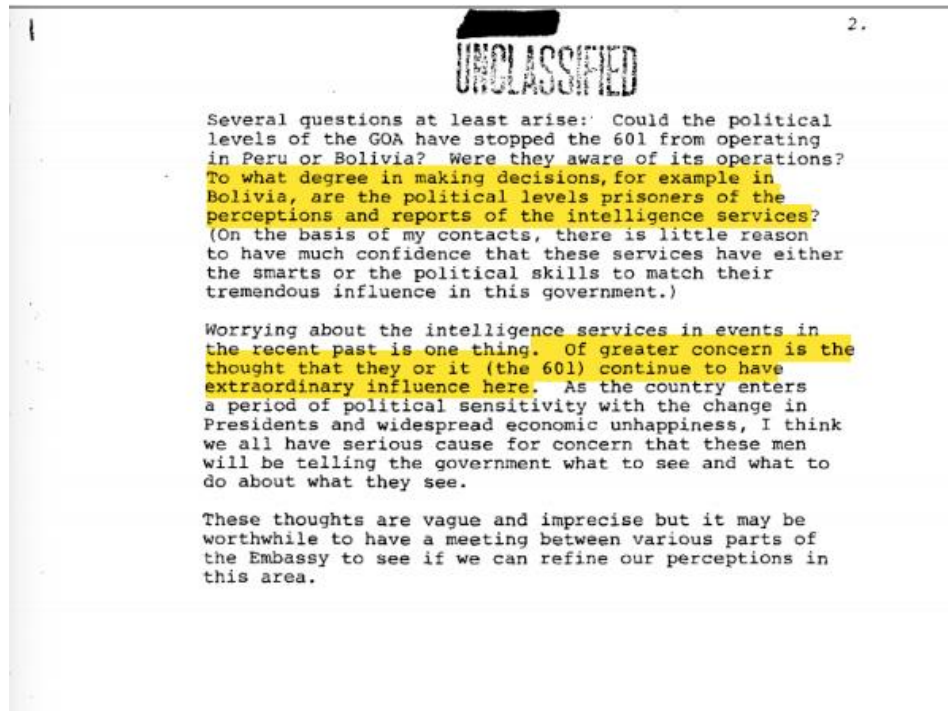


Figure 2. Memorandum: “Hypothesis—the GOA as Prisoner of Army Intelligence”

By August 1980, U.S. embassy political adviser Townsend B. Friedman, a colleague of Harris’ in Buenos Aires, wrote a memorandum whose subject line was “Hypothesis—The (Government of Argentina) as Prisoner of Army Intelligence” (Figure 2). In it Friedman began: “It is possible to conclude that the policy-making levels of the GOA are prisoners and victims of intelligence services here, particularly the Army’s 601 Battalion.” How was it then, especially after the 601 orchestration of the Bolivian military’s “cocaine coup” that same year, that the CIA and the Reagan Administration could make them our regional proto “extra-NATO” allies?

The *Post* series revealed that the Swiss Crypto Ag company, which the Agency secretly owned together with West German intelligence, put it in “a unique position to know the extent” of the atrocities taking place. What the Crypto documents “don’t show,” it reported, “is any substantial effort by U.S. spy agencies, or senior officials privy to the intelligence, to expose or stop human rights violations unfolding in their view.” The documents “highlight one of the eternal dilemmas of espionage: Is there an obligation to intervene or expose illegal or violent actions even if doing so might jeopardize a precious intelligence stream?”



*Dirty Secrets of the Dirty Wars*

The Argentine military junta declared that its dirty “war” against a supposedly vast leftist guerrilla threat was the “opening battle of World War III.” Those who themselves overthrew an elected government using a false pretext then aided and abetted some of the cruelest military dictators and their minions in Central America. A year after the coup in Buenos Aires, it unsuccessfully sought to beat back a popular challenge to the violent and corrupt regime in Nicaragua by supporting dictator (and West Point graduate) Anastasio Somoza Debayle’s brutal National Guard, later publicly presenting its role as largely due to the presence there of Argentine leftist guerrillas (whose leader, Mario Firmenich, according to the FBI legal attache in Buenos Aires who later headed the Bureau’s records management section in Washington, was actually an Army 601 intelligence battalion double agent).

“America must seize the initiative or perish,” the rightwing Council for Inter-American Security proclaimed in the summer of 1980 as its minions worked to assure its colleagues in Latin America that their candidate, Reagan, would do just that. “For World War III is almost over.” Reagan’s foreign policy team claimed Carter’s human rights policies betrayed U.S. anti-communist efforts focused on the Soviet Union. (Left unexamined was how the Reaganauts’ South American allies, the Argentine generals, furious about the Carter administration’s military sanctions due to gross violations of human rights, refused to join Washington’s grain embargo of the Soviet Union following Moscow’s 1979 military invasion of Afghanistan, actually increasing agricultural sales to their supposed Marxist international *bête noir*.)

By the time Reagan took office, Argentina’s dirty “warriors” had helped consolidate a Bolivian narcodictatorship that protected German Nazi war criminals and was aided by far-right Italian terrorists. The military, recalled Alexander Watson, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz when the coup took place, “was absolutely brutal...The Argentine regime...was an accomplice up to its ears in the coup.” The Bolivian military’s chief law enforcement officer, Watson remembered, “had his own fleet of 13 airplanes flying cocaine from a base up in Colombia where it was refined.” Watson assumed command at the embassy after Ambassador Marvin Weissman had to leave the country. This after “there were swastikas all over the walls because Marvin was Jewish.”

Reagan entered the White House having thoroughly disparaged the Carter human right efforts, particularly those centered on dictators operating out the Casa Rosada en Buenos Aires (later convicted in “mini-Nuremberg” trials in civilian court

for crimes against humanity). Already he had singled out the work of Carter human rights czar Patricia Derian (whose bravery in fighting for civil rights in Mississippi was matched by her valor in facing down despots overseas) for criticism, saying that she should “walk a mile in the moccasins” of the military dictators before she criticized them.

*Post Crypto, Key Questions Remain*

Left unanswered in the recent Crypto disclosures is how and whether crucial information remains shielded from what the Office of the Director of National Intelligence claimed was “a historic effort...to identify, review, and provide public access to records that shed light on human rights abuses in Argentina between 1975 and 1984.” Careful analysis of supposed mass declassification of U.S. records concerning the Argentine dirty “war” undertaken in various tranches dating back to the Clinton Administration suggests serious credibility issues that demand a fuller documentary accounting of what really transpired.

These documents shed some light on the U.S. role in that country. A possible Crypto connection involving U.S. Argentine dirty “war” partners might not show only what happened at El Mozote, where not unlike what the Germans did in at Auschwitz, villagers were herded into two groups—one of men, the other, women and children—and slaughtered, then buried in a mass grave. Crypto disclosures might also reveal the extent to which those in Washington as well as San Salvador and Buenos Aires for years sought to cover up the crimes, and how.<sup>3</sup>

A selective release of documents done so far, based in part on a refusal to disclose the identities of intelligence sources still living, can also be used to justify the continuing cover up of institutional complicities. The Crypto interception clearly improved the ability to carry out human intelligence; it is a stretch to assume that the documents already released fully reflect what became known through signals intelligence. Claiming that information from Crypto should remain outside the public square about foreign intelligence operatives working for those condemned in civilian courts of mass murder (using the Nuremberg precedent) is much harder to defend.

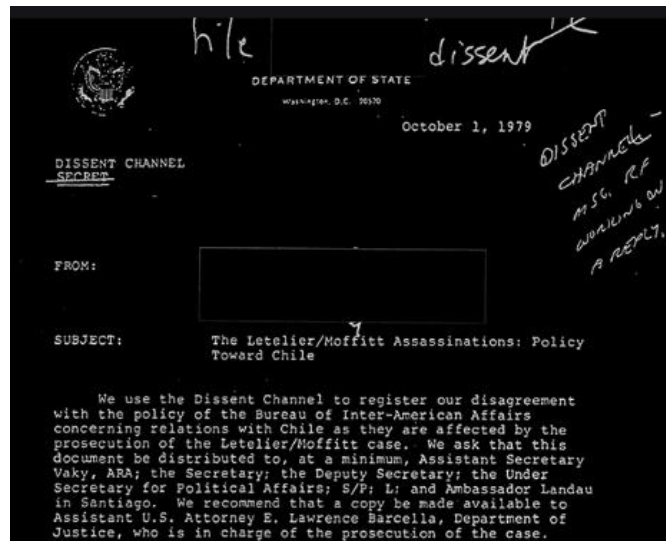
While by 2019 the promised handover to Argentina resulted in the U.S. release of some 47,000 declassified and unclassified pages, it is also true that Patt

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<sup>3</sup> As investigative journalist Robert Parry noted, “When evidence of the El Mozote butchery leaked out in stories published by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* in March 1982, the Reagan administration sought to discredit the information and the journalists.”

Derian had destroyed many of the most sensitive human rights documents in her possession—already kept deliberately away from the possible prying eyes of the bureaucratic security process—prior to the January 1981 hand over of power to the Reagan team, precisely due to her fears of what the rightwing handmaidens of state terrorists would do with them. Crypto shows that the most important means of reconstructing what happened is in the possession of an intelligence community whose paltry contributions to the much-ballyhooed official public disclosures has kept key facts outside the public domain.

A selective release of documents based in part on a refusal to disclose the identities of intelligence sources still living can also be used as justification for covering up institutional complicities. Although the Crypto interception clearly improved the ability to carry out human intelligence, it is a stretch to assume that the documents already released fully reflect what became known through signals intelligence. In an email, “KEY HRts Read,” to friends on the day the *Post* article was published, written just six days before he died, Tex Harris began his message about the newspaper’s Crypto scoops, “Many serious ethical and legal issues raised.”



Two decades ago, the first major criminal investigation (in which this author served as an expert witness) focusing on Operation Condor began in Rome and included defendants and their alleged victims from seven countries. John Dinges, the Columbia University journalist who is perhaps the single most knowledgeable expert on Condor, says—having studied all the declassified record—he does “not see any indication the intel was based on intercepts... There IS pretty clear evidence (based on the conclusions from my research) that the most important information gained

about Condor was based on humint (human intelligence), mainly Condor officials sharing info with CIA officers in the region.” After noting that there are “no examples of decryption of security force communications” in the declassified record, Dinges noted, “Of course, we are very unlikely to see that if it happened.” The Crypto intercepts, he observed, “should be declassified so we can answer those historical questions.”<sup>4</sup>

*Crypto clave (or the importance of the CIA's Argentine proxies)*

Operation Condor—which included as members Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay—initiated in Santiago but had its biggest effect among the exile communities living in Argentina. In the wake of the near war with Chile in 1978, Argentina began taking the lead in what earlier, under Condor, was to become an assassination campaign focused in Europe, one which, the CIA reported, included leaders of Amnesty International. Strong ties were forged with Central America’s most notorious “banana republic” dictators. It was the Argentine 601 intelligence battalion closely tied to the CIA that supervised the creation and training of anti-Sandinista former National Guardsmen, “the Contra.” Congressional opposition kept the Reagan Administration from openly supporting the anti-Sandinista rebels.

The CIA, however, knew exactly who it was dealing with in its secret Contra proxy war, the actions of which—as Reagan took office—effectively shut down the political space still available to the country’s internal opposition. In 1981, the corrupt Argentine 601 intelligence battalion, backed by Buenos Aires business interests, trained and supplied death squads in Guatemala, in El Salvador, and in Honduras. Tegucigalpa’s notorious Battalion 3-16, which sheltered and provided for Contra combatants based in their country, also received CIA training and equipment, with the Agency providing funds for Argentine “counter-insurgency experts” who schooled them too beginning the year Reagan was inaugurated.

During the Reagan Administration in Central America upwards of 200,000 people died in a quagmire of rage and repression. More than 70,000 were killed in El Salvador, more than 100,000 in Guatemala, and 30,000 in Nicaragua’s so-called “Contra War.” The poisonous clandestine operation led the CIA’s Argentine partners to wildly overestimate their power and in 1982 invade the Falklands/Malvinas Islands

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<sup>4</sup> The new edition of his book, *The Condor Years*, which includes five new chapters, is slated for release in 2021.

controlled by U.S. NATO ally Great Britain. The relationship was also key to understanding of the Iran-Contra scandal that, after going public, risked resulting in Reagan's impeachment.

From: **Cris Arcos** <[arcoscs@yahoo.com](mailto:arcoscs@yahoo.com)>  
Date: Mon, May 30, 2011 at 11:36 PM  
Subject: Re: Fwd: FW: Frank McGurk  
To: "Martin E. Andersen" <[martinedwinandersen@gmail.com](mailto:martinedwinandersen@gmail.com)>

Thanks..I kind enjoy your keen preparation of our collective suicide...I am afraid that your avalanche of memos and similar notes and bagatelles have made many peoples' sphincters snap shut...let us see what state of warpath they are tomorrow....they will seek blood

Former Ambassador to Honduras Crescencio Arcos later confirmed part of the Pentagon university's role in the 2009 military coup in Tegucigalpa

### *Deadly Nostalgia*

On September 7, 2020 more than 700 people, including most of the surviving leaders of the Montoneros, reclaimed armed struggle in what was called the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the leftwing Peronist guerrilla organization. Remembering the fallen among them, the group declared in a statement that “They were not poor innocent victims or manipulated naive young people, they were political militants in the intermittent civil war that Argentina has lived through since 1955.” The 700 also attacked the memory of President Raúl Alfonsín, who was the first elected leader in Latin America to put a previous military leadership on trial before a civilian court. The 1985 proceedings in Buenos Aires were popularly known as the “mini-Nuremberg” trial, in reference to the revival of international law that came with the judgement rendered by World War II allies in the courtroom against the remnant leaders of Nazi Germany. “This document does not imply that any of the signatories now supports positions with which they once disagreed, the text went on to say, referring to internal fights among the former guerrillas and their sympathizers that still persist today. “We are defending in solidarity the historical dignity and justice ... (and) repudiate the theory of the two demons, including the lying misrepresentation of history.”

Among those who signed on to a declaration in which questions of manipulation were front and center was Mario Firmenich, the one-time leader of what was then called the largest urban guerrilla organization in Latin America. It was Firmenich who years earlier was the prize catch of an elaborate military intelligence operation run by the same dirty warriors that the CIA used to do its own dirty work in Central America in the run-up to and during the Reagan Administration.

The declaration came from partisans of an organization that officially ceased to exist in 1990, when George H. W. Bush, a former head of the CIA during some of the dirty wars of the 1970s, was President. It stood in striking contrast to the positions taken by former leftist rebels in at least two neighboring countries, Brazil and Uruguay. As I pointed out in *Dossier Secreto; Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"* (Westview, 1993), in Brazil Jose Anselmo Dos Santos, a former navy enlisted man known as Cabo Anselmo, was first touted by the brutal military regime there as the fearsome head of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), supposedly waged a war until death against the U.S. supported dictatorship. In fact, in 1971 the guerrilla Dos Santos became an informant for the Sao Paulo Department of Social and Political Order run by CIA confidant and death squad sadist Sergio Paranhos Fleury. Dos Santos himself later noted, "Thanks to my indications, some 100 to 200 people died," including his Paraguayan wife, Soledad Viedma.

In neighboring Uruguay—where hundreds of whose leftist and democratic exiles suffered clandestine torture and murder in Buenos Aires—several leaders of the Tupamaros (arguably once the most successful Latin American urban guerrilla organization), such as union activist Hector Amodio Perez and former Socialist Party militant Mario Piriz Budes, worked secretly for that country's army intelligence before the generals there used an already exhausted leftist threat as an excuse to take power in what became "the torture chamber of Latin America." Uruguay's singular role in the repression was later recounted in *Hidden Terrors: The Truth About U.S. Police Operations in Latin America*, A.J. Langguth's rendition of reported CIA involvement there.

After the Argentine military regime crashed and burned following its ignominious 1982 defeat at the hands of the British in the South Atlantic, those in the know about the voluminous records held by the generals and their 601 intelligence mavens claimed that the real documentation about what actually happened in Argentina and beyond was spirited out of the country, away from the eyes of both civilian investigators and an anxious public. Those records have never surfaced. Given the disappearance of such documentation, the CIA's relationship to Mario Firmenich's military handler, Col. Alberto Valín, is key to understanding why Crypto documents are perhaps the only way to know what really happened in Central America. Valín was the head of the 601 Army Intelligence Batallion in 1976-1977, the unit that orchestrated not only the many facets of the dirty war in Argentina, but also that country's military operations abroad. Valín, who never faced judgment before a

civilian court, then became the head of the Argentine Army Intelligence before later being made the regime's ambassador to Panama when that country's de facto leader was also a highly paid CIA asset and traffic cop in Central America's dirty wars.

Firmenich has always denied served as a double agent. However, the supposedly "circumstantial" case against him is based on numerous incontrovertible facts. First, the former rightwing nationalist was the most important Montonero to stay alive when virtually all more leftist, or Marxist leaders, as well as the organization's original founders, were killed. Second, in a later much-publicized June 1975 press conference called to release a kidnapped businessman for what at the time was a world-record ransom, the supposedly clandestine event featuring Firmenich was attended by two state intelligence agents who went on to continue waging dirty war against real and suspected leftists.<sup>5</sup>

### Abogado Torres: "Fue una mera coincidencia"

**D**ías atrás, *Expreso* entrevistó a Fernando Torres, defensor de Mario Firmenich y por 16 años abogado de la CGT. La charla se llevó a cabo en la casa de Torres, en San Isidro.

—Se habla mucho de la coincidencia de la casa de Martínez, en Libertad 244, que era una casa operativa de la SIDE donde había gente secuestrada y donde seis meses después apareció Firmenich dando una supuesta conferencia clandestina en el caso de Born. ¿Usted habló con Firmenich sobre eso?

—La casa ésa fue alquilada en ese momento por Francisco Urondo y Luis Guagnini, los dos periodistas que organizaron la conferencia. Cuando Firmenich fue allí ni sabía a dónde era conducido, llevado y sacado por la confianza que le merecían Urondo y Guagnini. Creemos que

fue una simple coincidencia, y que si Nelson Romero, el hombre de la SIDE, hubiera sabido que en esa casa se hacía la conferencia y que estaba Firmenich y que estaba Born lo hubiera denunciado. No se ha probado la más mínima coincidencia entre los dos grupos. Romero está prófugo de la justicia desde hace un tiempo por la muerte de ese chico Polisecki, pero nunca surgió ningún elemento de juicio que permitiera deducir una convivencia entre Nelson Romero y el grupo Montoneros.

Tenían campos de acción totalmente diferentes, tanto es así que Nelson Romero había actuado en Tucumán con el general Bussi como colaborador de las fuerzas represivas.

—¿En el '76 todavía estaba actuando?

—Había actuado, sí.

—¿O en el '74?

—Había actuado en el '74, cuando fue muerto el chico Polisecki, y después siguió actuando. El tuvo toda la protección oficial con la muerte del chico Polisecki. Fue encubierto, pero después las investigaciones progresaron y lo condenaron los cómplices de él.

—¿De dónde sacó el dato de que Romero trabajó con el general Bussi?

—Lo declararon el comandante Correa y el coronel Godoy en el mismo expediente de Firmenich. Ellos fueron llamados a declarar en lo que llamamos "la causa paralela", donde se investiga el destino dado al dinero presuntamente extorsionado. Y lo admitieron. Declaró Silchinger, el socio de Romero, y declararon los dos protectores de Romero, el comandante de Gendarmería Correa y el coronel Godoy.

—¿Era una casa de fiestas, como alegó alguna gente de Peronismo Revolucionario?

—Era una casa que compró Romero. Tanto es así que vivía allí con su mujer y la utilizaron como, por ejemplo, en el caso Polisecki, cuando lo tuvieron encerrado unos 10 días. Creemos que fue una mera coincidencia. Romero debía haber conocido a Guagnini o a Urondo por algún motivo.

—Dicen que los padres de Firmenich no sufrieron la represión durante el Proceso.

—Exacto, no fueron molestados para nada.

—Hasta el padre siguió dictando cursos en la Facultad de Ingeniería.

—Y era funcionario en la Municipalidad de Buenos Aires. Se jubiló como director de pavimentos... en el tiempo del brigadier Osvaldo Cacciatore.

[https://www.academia.edu/27956817/SIDE\\_Montoneros\\_La\\_Conexión\\_Secreta\\_Historia\\_d\\_el\\_Doble\\_Agente\\_Mario\\_Firmenich](https://www.academia.edu/27956817/SIDE_Montoneros_La_Conexión_Secreta_Historia_d_el_Doble_Agente_Mario_Firmenich)

In 1976, with the Argentine military at the peak of its repressive onslaught, Firmenich's pregnant wife was detained by security forces and, according to Scherrer,

<sup>5</sup> Prior to the press conference, the agents tortured and murdered an adolescent at the house in another extortive kidnapping gambit. The kidnapping of the businessman helped create a climate of terror in a country whose economy was falling apart, something the military used to justify its seizure of power in March of 1976.

who saw her in captivity, was not tortured. Unlike the closest family members of many other leaders of the Montoneros and the Marxist People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) who were victims in the slaughter, Firmenich's parents lived undisturbed in Buenos Aires throughout the military dictatorship, his father working for the Air Force general who was mayor of Buenos Aires. After being trained in Lebanon and Syria, what remained of the already-decimated Montonero combatants were in 1979 sent back to Argentina (in supposed clandestinity) for a "final offensive" where they were immediately detected, captured, tortured, and killed. Firmenich and his highly-militarized chief aide, Mario Montoto, who supervised and coordinated the training of the combatants, remained outside Argentina as the massacre took place. Yet when Nicaragua's Sandinistas took power, a Firmenich in full combat regalia was featured on the cover of the 601-military controlled *Somos* magazine, hamming it up in Anastasio Somoza's former bunker. In 1981, after the 601 batallon directed the coup in Bolivia and while it served as CIA proxies in Central America, Firmenich's wife and child were allowed to leave Argentina before the Falkland/Malvinas war by General Leopoldo Galtieri, who just two years earlier had been supposedly targeted by Firmenich for assassination in Mexico.

When the corrupt Peronist Carlos Menem replaced Alfonsín in 1989, the guest of honor at his inauguration was Kissinger; it was already public knowledge that he had blessed the dirty war junta. Menem, later the United States' "extra-NATO ally," went on to publicly hail former Argentine federal police chief Alberto Villar, one of the founders of the notorious ultra-rightwing Triple A death squads, as a law enforcement model. Menem also pardoned Firmenich in 1990, supposedly to "balance" a similar gesture for military junta members found guilty in a civilian court during the Alfonsín government. Menem's chief of staff, who was feted by the former CIA Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Vernon Walters, admitted privately that his boss knew Firmenich was a double agent. "Firmenich is a traitor, a cadaver, worse than (military dictator) Videla, a despicable being in every sense of the word," said Hebe de Bonafini, the president of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. "Everyone knows that he was on the side of the military."

*In the FBI Versus the CIA, Crypto Matters*

What the US embassy human rights reporting lacked was real knowledge about the inner workings of the murderous Argentine military and intelligence communities, and their total control over the country's police forces. What it had in



its possession was happenstance; more than 40 years later, those questions and what they mean are key both for historians and for policy makers. The FBI's representative in South America, Robert W. "Bob" Scherrer epitomized law enforcement in the public interest in the only region traditionally left by Washington to the cops rather than spies to defend. According to Tex Harris and other U.S. diplomats serving in Buenos Aires at the time, the joke at the U.S. Embassy was that its legal attaché, Scherrer, generated the same amount of valuable information as 10 CIA case officers.

Scherrer's pioneering investigative work on the 1976 assassination of the former Chilean Popular Unity foreign minister Letelier and his American assistant was what first brought him into the public spotlight, earning him in 1989 a special recognition award from the Institute of Policy Studies for his work in uncovering who carried out the attack, and at whose direction, on its former employees. As the most important US official working under Ambassador Robert Hill, a conservative Republican political appointee who nevertheless waged a behind-the-scenes battle against Kissinger's green light to the neo-Nazi generals for their dirty war, Scherrer's liaison work with Argentine security and intelligence officials was arguably even more important.



Dr. K and his colleague, Capt. General Augusto Pinochet

*Overruling aides on Chilean military regime's human rights atrocities in 1976 Kissinger told Pinochet : "We want to help, not undermine you. You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende."*

In my research for *Dossier Secreto* I received two letters from, and then had a face-to-face interview at FBI headquarters with, Scherrer, who reported that the supposed threat offered by the guerrillas at the time, which was used as justification for the 1976 far-right military coup against an elected government, was vastly overblown. The second letter, typed at home by Scherrer, by then the chief of the FBI's record

management section, reflected the fact that he was close to retiring from the Bureau, due to complications of multiple sclerosis. As Scherrer flatly noted: “A considerable portion of the murders, kidnappings and extortions attributed to the guerrillas were caused by other elements...Terrorism in Argentina was serious and deadly but its scope was exaggerated...[it was] a convenient vehicle for irresponsible elements of the military and their civilian counterparts to seek retaliation against real or imagined wrongs.”

Firmenich, Scherrer said, worked for the Army's 601 intelligence battalion and reported directly to Argentine General Valín, the clandestine lord and master of Agency operations with the Nicaraguan Contras as well as in neighboring countries. While Scherrer had no problem casting to one side stories from seeming reputable Argentine sources, he not only confirmed the suspicions I had about Firmenich's real identity based on the questions raised above, but went on to specifically confirm the Montonero's role in the discovery and murder of ERP leader Julio Santucho just hours before the Marxist guerrilla was to flee to Cuba. “Santucho's death was the result of Firmenich's cooperation with the Argentine army,” he wrote. “Santucho's body was indeed displayed at a remote location at the Campo de Mayo (army base outside Buenos Aires) by invitation viewing only. I saw his body myself. Several colonels and other Argentine Army officers took the opportunity to urinate on Santucho's body.”

Following the final disbursement of the 2019 documents to the Argentine government by the Trump administration—with its reduced number of intelligence community written, printed, and electronic matter included—critics claiming that Firmenich was indeed an authentic Montonero point to the fact that those CIA documents released do not in fact say that he was a double agent. Privately, skeptics have asked why they should believe Scherrer, when his official FBI reporting does not mention it either, at least that which has been publicly released. Scherrer, they point out, could be wrong.

Several questions are in fact worth answering. First, declassified FBI documents do show the amazing in depth reporting the FBI legal attaché was able to do in the field, using contacts more than happy to give a hand to a U.S. agency once headed by J. Edgar Hoover. Second, under Scherrer, reporting to the Bureau in Washington was conducted using a secret communications channel said to be unavailable to the Agency still in jurisdictional rivalry with the FBI, and to other members of the country team. Third, no one has ever suggested that Ambassador Hill

did not value Scherrer's insights enormously; at the same time, according to Hill's family, the Kissinger critic and five-time ambassadorial appointee sent two CIA station chiefs packing for what he thought was highly unprofessional conduct. In addition, why assume that Scherrer, who received the IPS award as well as media accolades for his work on the Letelier-Moffitt case, would not have been equally energetic and forthcoming on questions involving the Argentine dirty war? Why would someone of the public stature Scherrer gained throughout his career issue near its end tell bald-faced lies writing and put his signature on them, about the already-failed Firmenich? Finally, the declassified documents released by the Agency and by the Bureau are heavily redacted, thus leaving key questions about sources and methods not only unanswered, but perhaps the object of a process meant to leave certain truths unrevealed. There are questions as well as to whether—with Firmenich and his personal aide Mario Montoto still alive—senior intelligence community officials would allow the two to be identified as minions of the CIA's chief operative within the 601 intelligence batallion.

In dismissing Scherrer's work, arguments in favor of what obviously was not an exhaustive or comprehensive information dump in the intelligence community's contributions to FOIA disclosures up to this point—and before public disclosure of the CIA role in Crypto—are both curious and counterproductive. For the last three decades Firmenich has made a career of making inflammatory and provocative public statements while in comfortable exile in Spain, with Montoto having gone to play a very effective influence peddler and mouthpiece in Buenos Aires. Their possible continuing utility for a CIA seeking to create the kind of narrative strategy that would put its illegal role in what was about to become known as the Iran-Contra scandal in the best light is undeniable: within days of the junta leaders who did Agency bidding in Central America being convicted in the 1985 mini-Nuremberg trials in Argentina, DDCI Gen. Walters sent the clandestine network for hire a message and a lifeline, warning darkly of a possible resurgence of subversion in countries such as Argentina and Uruguay: “the Montoneros and the Tupamaros have not died, they've simply gone into clandestinity and now they're returning.”

Since the George H. W. Bush administration the pistol-backing Montoto, who previously carried out Montonero military training in Syria and Lebanon, has gone on to enjoy great financial wealth in Argentina as an arms merchant and president of the Israeli-Argentina Chamber of Commerce. It was during the Bush presidency that he issued a peculiar warning to me in front of the White House

several years after I began to investigate Firmenich's real institutional loyalties. As I chatted with Argentine friends who were part of a large U.S. sponsored delegation visiting Washington—in which Montoto was included—while they posed for pictures outside in LaFayette Square, the warning spat out by Firmenich's onetime righthand gunslinger was terse and to the point: "If you come any closer, I will have my friends in Langley take care of you."

*Elegy by Way of Epilogue*

The case of Julio Cirino, aka "Jorge Contreras," the chief of the Army 601 Intelligence Battalion's Grupo de Tareas #7, is instructive. I personally knew Cirino from the time he was a favored guest at U.S. Southern Command's William Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) at the National Defense University, despite their knowing of his prior death squad career. He was later convicted for his alleged role in the kidnapping of five Montoneros who tried to return to Argentina as part of Firmenich's 1980 "Counteroffensive." Declassified documents from 1979 revealed that Cirino told interlocutors at the U.S. embassy that the 601 killed people unconnected with left wing terrorists so that they would not be able to testify as to the dirty "warriors" identity. He bragged about having visited three clandestine concentration camps, including Club Atlético, the basement of a police warehouse that was key to Operation Condor in Argentina and a place where women were hooded, handcuffed, raped, and tortured using electric shock. Having been a partisan of neo-Nazi organizations before the 1976 coup Cirino, the head of Argentina Human Rights Secretariat charged, "had a key role in counterinsurgency task groups in Central America." Although I protested his participation in NDU events, I was summarily overruled; El Gordo Cirino was later condemned to six years imprisonment for crimes against humanity.

Among those Cirino counted on as NDU allies was Professor Jaime García Covarrubias, who in August 2020 was sentenced to five years in jail for being an accomplice in the wanton murder of Rubén Eduardo Morales Jara, an unarmed detainee who was a college professor. García Covarrubias began his career as a student at the notorious School of the Americas, which was shut down by Congress in 2000 (where senior NDU official Kenneth LaPlante and García Covarrubias' protector was both a former instructor and, later, foremost apologist.) In November of 2013, García Covarrubias was indicted for the murder of seven other unarmed civilians in Temuco. The former NDU professor was later promoted to the rank of

head of counter intelligence for DINA, the international state terrorist organization. In 1988, García Covarrubias became General Pinochet's general sub-secretary before serving, between 1995 and 1997, as the director of the Chilean War Academy, where in 1975 Condor was formally created. In a March 12, 2015 exposé about the Garcia Covarrubias case by *McClatchyDC*, when asked about the Chilean's former role in DINA, a senior NDU official replied without having been asked, "Someone who has previously worked with the CIA might not have been excluded from hiring."

Hayes, who hired Garcia Covarrubias, stressed that he would have been too young to be "in any kind of command position" in DINA. Asked whether it was a disqualifier, she said it depended "on what he might have been doing at the time."

"Someone who has previously worked with the CIA might not have been excluded from hiring," she offered.

McClatchy asked the CIA whether Garcia Covarrubias had ever worked with the agency.

"No comment," said Kali Caldwell, a CIA spokeswoman.

If the CIA was reporting in 1976 that it believed that Pinochet in fact directed the Washington, D.C. terrorist outrage, and went on to tell then Secretary of State George Shultz in the mid-1980s that it had "conclusive" evidence of that, how is it that some 15 years later a classified background check would not show exactly who former DINA senior official García Covarrubias was and what he did to achieve his meteoric rise up the chain of command in a barbaric regime steeped in neo-Nazi techniques and organization?

However, one of Garcia Covarrubias' alleged victims has described being brutalised by him.

"They submitted us to torture, twice a day. We were submerged in faeces," said Herman Carrasco, who's now a real estate agent in Chile. "They stuck rifle barrels in our anuses."

According to Mr Carrasco, the torture unfolded in October and November 1973 - lorded over by the horsewhip-wielding Garcia Covarrubias - and included electric shocks administered to eyelids, genitals and other sensitive areas of the body.

"He was the person who tortured us, with his face shown," said Mr Carrasco, who added that he'd known Dr Garcia Covarrubias from social events before the coup. "He forced us into sexual acts, which shows that besides ferocious cruelty there was a level of psychopathic behaviour."

Another CHDS speaker, despite my protests then and since, was Montoto. On June 14, 1980, while the then-Montonero handled the personal security of Firmenich, Montoto's wife, "lieutenant" María Inés Raverta, was kidnapped and "disappeared" in Lima, Perú. The 601 operation resulted in one of the two other Montoneros who went missing at the same time mysteriously reappearing, her body in a state of decomposition, in an apartment in Madrid. The Argentine junta denied any involvement, saying that the fact the woman's corpse surfaced in Spain "was the most obvious evidence of the falsity of the smear campaign hatched" against it for what had happened in Peru.



Mario Montoto celebrating Argentine Army Day (2019)

In 2006, Montoto declared that the Montoneros "never wanted the dissolution of the Armed Forces. What's more, we never imagine the country without them." Two years later, as the godfather to Firmenich's daughter spoke before one group at NDU, a longtime U.S. military attached in Buenos Aires, Col. (ret.) Robert Olson, remarked, "Ah, I see Gen. Valín's protégé is now teaching our classes."

Why NDU found it appropriate to feature someone whose organization was responsible for the 1975 torture and murder of U.S. diplomat John Patrick Egan was another question. Interestingly, a journalist working for Infobae, an important medium for which Montoto is widely believed to have a controlling interest, went out of his way to try to discredit Scherrer's investigation of Egan's death. He cited (as a

cascade of articles and books by those seeking to resuscitate Firmenich's image as a revolutionary warrior always cite) an anonymous source from the famously corrupt and drug-trafficking police of that time, the same people that were on Scherrer's watch being closely monitored by the FBI special agent. The unnamed source claimed that he "remembered" that, when Egan's body was found, there was no blood on his pants. Egan was in fact tortured, Scherrer had written in his second letter to me, his "genitals were cut off." Given the international reach of the story at the time Egan was kidnapped and killed, it is unlikely that Scherrer would have forgotten what really happened to the honorary counsel.

In apparent repayment for his appearance at the NDU, the person many believe may be the wealthiest businessman in Argentina, made his sponsor, the notorious Lt. Col. (ret.) Craig Deare, a member of his Taeda Foundation's "Committee of Notables."<sup>6</sup> I had repeatedly warned about Montoto's otherwise unchallenged appearance, pointing out that "we get involved with this guy...it will likely be perceived that (the William Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies at NDU) is involved in an (intelligence) op."

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## LA NACION

También rechaza por "ridícula" la posibilidad de que Firmenich fuera un agente al servicio del Ejército, como sostuvo el periodista norteamericano Martin Andersen. Y niega que la llamada "contraofensiva" de 1979 y 1980 haya sido una matanza: "Hubo muchos compañeros que no fueron secuestrados". La contraofensiva, o "el tren de la victoria", como la llamaba Perdía, fue una cacería de montoneros que eran atrapados y desaparecidos apenas entraban en el país.

According to Montoto, the idea of Firmenich being a double agent was "ridiculous"

The cynical Carlos Menem model—in which "balances" involving support for people on the same side were cynically portrayed as "just" as they (falsely) claimed they in fact represented, and thus balanced out, diametrically different interests—remained in operation in NDU calculations about who to invite and who should be sheltered at the Pentagon's University. Montoto was not the only "leftist guerrilla" whose ostensible and ostentatious history was highlighted as he lectured there.

Former Salvadoran Frente Faribundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) commander Joaquín Villalobos was another featured guest. By the time he

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<sup>6</sup> Deare was a former army intelligence officer and a senior NDU official who repeatedly said that García Covarrubias was his best friend and who later became Trump's first national security adviser for Latin America.

was invited Villalobos had turned his back on his former comrades, shifting sharply to the political right. Why he was promoted at an NDU physically hundreds of miles away from the old School of the Americas, but ideologically just next door, was an inside joke that could have also been made about Firmenich's selling out of rival comrade Mario Roberto Santucho.

Roque Dalton was a Catholic poet who went on to head an organization that ironically had the same name, Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), as that of Santucho's Marxist organization. Dalton was important enough to have been honored after this death by Cuban singer Silvio Rodríguez in "Unicornio azul." As in the case of Santucho's murder, those who helped kill him were never brought to justice. Unlike Santucho, Dalton spoke up against those in the FMLN who sought to engage in armed insurrection, arguing instead they should create a popular movement. Accused of insubordination and of working for the CIA, Dalton was "arrested" and submitted to "revolutionary justice."

Although Villalobos later admitted that the charge that Dalton was a "CIA agent" was without foundation, he killed him. Dalton's case was never included in the Truth Commission set up at the end of the civil war in 1992. It was dismissed 20 years later by Mauricio Funes, the FMLN politician later under investigation for suspicion of corruption. At NDU, the conscious promotion of Villalobos while snickering how another of their chosen "leftists" had in fact killed Dalton was nothing more than a bureaucratic representation of how Argentine army officers urinated on Santucho.

"At its height, Condor covered 10 percent of the world's populated land mass," *The Guardian* article noted, "and formed what Francesca Lessa of Oxford University called 'a borderless area of terror and impunity.'" Subsequent history shows how that land mass not only shifted, but grew. Only by unravelling the secrets that can come with the declassification of Cryto will the joke no longer be on us. #JusticeMatters.




I now submit to the ICC evidence of the continuing trans-Andean relationship between Garcia Covarrubias and Cirino, one an NDU professor, the other a promoted guest speaker and conference participant at the Pentagon's university, both having worked for regimes that took as their security model Nazi-like concentration camps. ...

 **Jaime Garcia - Cova...** Author 2d ...  
Consultor en materias Defensa/Seguri...  
Muchas gracias !!  
[See translation](#)




 **Julio A. Cirino** · 2nd 10h ...  
Director at Geoeconomicsgp  
Jaime querido, tengo tres mails tuyos, no se cual es el bueno, si puedes mandame uno a [el.federalista@gmail.com](mailto:el.federalista@gmail.com) para reconectar. Abrazo  
[See translation](#)



 **Marcello Tapia** · 2nd 5d ...  
Abogado, profesor universitario y consultor...  
muy interesante el punto de vista profesor, muy aportativo en esta etapa de entender y dimensionar la crisis, y así proponer las mejores soluciones. un abrazo.  
[See translation](#)

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 **Jaime Garcia - Cova...** Author 4d ...  
Consultor en materias Defensa/Seguri...  
Gracias Marcello